

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 08671 141940Z
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INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 8671

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, EC, PE
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER EXPLAINS ECUADOREAN SIDE OF CANCELLA-
TION OF VISIT OF PERUVIAN PRESIDENT

1. THE FOREIGN MINISTER CALLED ME IN ON THE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 13 FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPLAINING TO ME THE BACKGROUND TO THE POSTPONEMENT SINE DIE OF THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ OF PERU. THE MINISTER SAID THAT ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF ADMIRAL PARODI OF PERU TO ECUADOR SOME TIME AGO THE PERUVIAN ADMIRAL RAISED WITH PRESIDENT POVEDA THE POSSIBILITY OF AN AIRPORT STOP ON PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ' RETURN FLIGHT FROM VENEZUELA. ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER, POVEDA TOLD PARODI THAT AMONG THE SUBJECTS THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED WAS THE TERRITORIAL PROBLEM BETWEEN PERU AND ECUADOR AND PARODI REPLIED THAT THE TWO PRESIDENTS COULD DISCUSS ANYTHING THEY WISHED. SUBSEQUENTLY, IT WAS DECIDED BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO ISSUE A JOINT COMMUNIQUE BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY IN AGREEING ON THE INCLUSION OF ANY REFERENCE TO THE TERRITORIAL QUESTION. INSTEAD, BOTH SIDES WOULD ISSUE THEIR OWN PRESS RELEASES, GIVING THEIR VERSION OF THE TALKS. THE ECUADOREANS THEN PREPARED A PRESS RELEASE WHICH INCLUDED REFERENCE TO THE TERRITORIAL ISSUE. THIS WAS SENT TO LIMA IN ADVANCE AND WORD CAME BACK THAT THE PERUVIANS COULD NOT AGREE TO THE ECUADOREAN PRESS RELEASE. AT THIS POINT THE ECUADOREANS DECIDED THAT THE VISIT WOULD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 QUITO 08671 141940Z

HAVE TO BE CALLED OFF. THE MINISTER SAID THAT THE GOE

HAD TOLD THE GOP THAT IF A VISIT WERE TO TAKE PLACE WITHOUT A MENTION OF THE TERRITORIAL QUESTION BY THE ECUADOREAN GOVERNMENT IT WOULD CREATE SUCH A FUROR OF ANIMOSITY AGAINST PERU THAT THE VISIT WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF STRAINING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THEREFORE THE GOE ASKED THAT THE VISIT BE POSTPONED INDEFINITELY.

2. ACCORDING TO PESANTES, THE PERUVIAN REACTION TO THIS WAS TO RECALL THEIR AMBASSADOR AS WELL AS THEIR DEFENSE ATTACHES. WORD HAD COME FROM LIMA THAT THE PERUVIANS MIGHT MAKE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THEIR AMBASSADOR PERMANENT, THUS FORCING ECUADOR TO WITHDRAW ITS AMBASSADOR TO LIMA. HOWEVER, THE LATEST INFORMATION WAS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR WOULD BE RETURNING, ALTHOUGH THE ECUADOREANS ARE NOT YET SURE OF THIS BECAUSE MORALES BERMUDEZ HAS NOT YET RETURNED TO PERU, AND PRESUMABLY THE FINAL DECISION WOULD BE HIS.

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT HE WAS GIVING ME THIS BACKGROUND FOR TRANSMISSION TO MY GOVERNMENT IN ORDER THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT ECUADOR HAD ONLY ACTED IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF ITS RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBOR. HE ALSO TOLD ME THAT OF COURSE NO ECUADOREAN GOVERNMENT COULD AFFORD TO RECEIVE A PERUVIAN PRESIDENT AND LEAVE THE IMPRESSION WITH THE ECUADOREAN PUBLIC THAT IT HAD NOT RAISED THE TERRITORIAL QUESTION. TO DO SO, HE SAID, WOULD BE TO COMMIT HARA KIRI.

4. I TOLD THE FOREIGN MINISTER THAT I WOULD PASS ON HIS EXPLANATION TO MY GOVERNMENT. I ADDED THAT, OF COURSE, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT COULD TAKE NO OFFICIAL POSITION IN THIS MATTER, EXCEPT THAT WE WOULD HOPE THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WOULD NOT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED.

5. COMMENT: THE KEY QUESTION, OF COURSE, IS WHETHER THE PERUVIANS WERE INDEED PUT ON NOTICE AT THE OUTSET BY THE GOE THAT THE TERRITORIAL QUESTION WOULD HAVE TO BE MENTIONED IN THE ECUADOREAN PRESS RELEASE. IN ANY EVENT, IT WOULD SEEM NAIVE ON THE PART OF THE PERUVIANS TO BELIEVE THAT THE ECUADOREANS COULD DO OTHERWISE, GIVEN THAT THE TERRITORIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUITO 08671 141940Z

QUESTION IS THE MOST NEURALGIC POINT IN ECUADOR'S ENTIRE FOREIGN RELATIONS.
BLOOMFIELD

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